

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
Division of Forestry and Wildlife
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

March 11, 2010

Chairperson and Members
Board of Land and Natural Resources
State of Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii

Land Board Members:

**SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION FOR THE CHAIR TO DEVELOP AND EXECUTE
A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE WAIANAE
MOUNTAINS WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP**

SUMMARY:

This board submittal requests the Board to authorize the Chairperson to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Waianae Mountains Watershed Partnership pursuant to the terms outlined below and subject to approval by the Attorney General.

BACKGROUND:

The proposed Waianae Mountains Watershed Partnership includes seven landowners:

- Department of Land and Natural Resources
- Honolulu Board of Water Supply
- Gill Olson Joint Venture
- Kaala Farm
- United States Army Garrison, Hawaii
- United States Navy, Region Hawaii
- Waianae Community Re-Development Corporation (MAO Organic Farms)

Since 1991, DLNR has become a member of ten existing voluntary alliances of public and private landowners protecting over one million acres of forested watershed for water recharge and conservation values. Yet, despite the success of the existing watershed partnerships, no watershed partnership exists to address watershed and conservation management issues for the Waianae Mountains on a regional scale. In 2005, The Nature Conservancy, contracted through the Department of Land and Natural Resources, prepared a final report, "Assessing the Potential Formation of a Watershed and Conservation Partnership for the Mauka (upland) Region of the Waianae Mountains, Oahu." Through resource analysis, interviews with owners and land

managers, and discussion with community stakeholders, the report concluded that there is sufficient confluence of interest, need and opportunity to merit establishment of a partnership in a portion of the study area. The Waianae mountain range is a primary source of water for the residents of Oahu and its forests are home to rare and increasingly threatened native species and ecosystems. This range is the originating point for 19 watersheds that collect and filter water over 144,000 acres. Urban growth and watershed impact, such as the loss of native forest and the diversion of water, have resulted in increased water pollution, soil erosion and runoff. Other key threats to the Waianae Mountains include: invasive species, feral ungulates, human activities, wildfire, and aquatic pollutants.

A grant was awarded to the Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit at the University of Hawaii to form the Waianae Mountains Watershed Partnership and draft an action plan. In August, 2009, Yumi Miyata was hired as the Waianae Mountains Watershed Partnership coordinator. Through the 2005 report, 147 landowners were identified in the Waianae Mountains. Following the recommendation to establish a watershed partnership with the largest landowners first, and then include smaller landowners once the ground work was laid, a list of 18 landowners was generated. Of these, five land owners expressed immediate interest in joining a partnership. In addition to these five, two smaller land owners with strong community ties to the Waianae Mountains also expressed strong interest in the partnership. The coordinator met with all of the potential partners individually, fostering relationships with each land owner, and going on site visits to each land owner's property. Meetings with the potential partners were held in November and December of 2009 and January and February of 2010. Meetings focused on identifying each party's interests, concerns, goals and objectives of becoming members of a watershed partnership, drafting an MOU, and drafting an action plan for the partnership. Through these meetings, the partners drafted a vision, mission, goals and objectives for the Waianae Mountains Watershed Partnership.

DISCUSSION:

The goal of the MOU is to establish a cooperative, voluntary partnership that will restore, protect and enhance the Waianae Mountains watersheds, while incorporating traditional, cultural and community values for future generations.

Under the terms of the MOU, the partners will cooperatively develop and implement management strategies for the Waianae Mountains, mauka to makai. The partnership will bring people together to responsibly manage watershed areas, native species and their habitats, and historical, cultural and socio-economic resources for all who benefit from the continued health of all of the Waianae Mountains ahupua'a.

The proposed Waianae Mountains Watershed Partnership MOU is based largely on an MOU signed in September, 2009 by the Mauna Kea Watershed Alliance. The MOU calls on the partners to voluntarily:

- Identify important watershed areas that would benefit from coordinated management;
- Develop plans to document resources, identify priority management objectives and strategies;
- Meet to determine cooperative programs and projects;

- Obtain funds for projects to the extent that each member agrees;
- Develop specific agreements and plans for projects involving all or some members;
- Enter into agreements to hire personnel, use equipment, purchase supplies;
- Employ a consensus-based approach to decision making;
- Allow additional members through amendment, by consensus of current members.

Members also agree that the MOU does not obligate resources, lands, or funds, nor does it create a legal partnership or modify the existing authority of any government agency.

RECOMMENDATION:

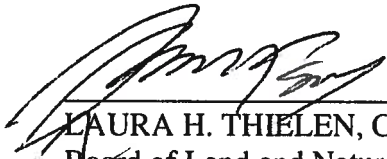
That the Board authorize the Chairperson to develop and execute a Memorandum of Understanding with the Waianae Mountains Watershed Partnership, as described above, subject to approval as to form of the Memorandum of Understanding by the Attorney General's office.

Respectfully submitted,



PAUL J. CONRY, Administrator

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL:



LAURA H. THIELEN, CHAIRPERSON
Board of Land and Natural Resources

